



HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DUNCAN HUNTER – CHAIRMAN

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CHAIRMAN HUNTER OPENING STATEMENT

Full Committee Hearing on the Quadrennial Defense Review: Goals and Principles

Washington, D.C. – Our hearing today will focus on the Defense Department’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which is due to Congress in February 2006. We’ve invited some expert witnesses from outside the Department to comment on what the QDR should seek to achieve and the kinds of principles the department should follow as it works through the process.

In the federal government, the Department of Defense is unique in that it regularly looks at its long-term plans, strategy and resources and asks itself fundamental questions about how to achieve its mission. The Quadrennial Defense Review formalizes that process. Currently, DOD is conducting its 2005 QDR, and anticipates delivery of a final product in February 2006, concurrent with the 2007 Department of Defense budget request.

As most of you know, the QDR is a massive effort involving all elements in DOD. This year’s QDR is likely to be even more comprehensive since it is looking at roles and missions that go well beyond the department’s warfighting strengths, experience and expertise. When the Quadrennial Defense Review moves in the direction of partner capacity building, cyberthreats and homeland defense; it’s moving into missions in which the Departments of State, Justice and Homeland Security may have the primary role. To its credit, DOD is recognizing that national security in the 21st century demands the effective use of all the elements of national power. But, at the same time, tackling these issues may dilute the department’s focus on its warfighting responsibilities. We need to make sure that the department strikes the right balance in its various responsibilities.

This hearing will help us do that. We have invited outside experts – who have varying degrees of experience inside the department, and who have given serious thought to the department’s future – to offer their advice about the goals that we should set for the defense review and the principles that the department should follow to get there.

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That said; hearings are not the only way that the committee can – or should – carry out its responsibilities. Over the last few weeks, some of us have talked about the committee doing its own defense review. I'm not talking about something as large, comprehensive or detailed as the Quadrennial Defense Review. There is no real benefit in duplicating the Defense Department's review and we just do not have enough resources for that. I'm also not talking about setting up a review with the sole intent of second-guessing the Quadrennial Defense Review. That will happen anyway inside the beltway.

Instead, we should try and set up a bipartisan process to consider long-term threats to U.S. national security, reach conclusions about what the armed forces will need to deal with them and determine what resources will be necessary to get there. Going through that process will be a challenge, but we do something like that every year when we write a defense authorization bill. We make implicit assumptions about threats; we look at program execution and we allocate resources down to the program level to get the military what we think it needs. A defense review would enable us to step back and take a more focused and disciplined look at threats and how to counter them, rather than the normal legislative calendar allows.

The conclusions we reach along the way will help us place the Quadrennial Defense Review into context and to form educated opinions about its strengths and weaknesses. More importantly, we will be able to incorporate what we learn in the fiscal year 2007 defense authorization. At the end of the day, we will produce an independent product that represents a bipartisan committee view of what our strategic defense priorities should be. After this hearing, there will be a members' meeting to discuss a process for moving forward, for keeping our review focused and narrow enough to be useful, and for involving a much larger number of our members in leadership roles so we can take better advantage of their talents and experience.

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